



Kansas Sheriffs' Association

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Testimony to the Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice In Opposition to HB2484-Good Time Credits February 3, 2020

Chairman Jennings and Committee Members,

The Kansas Sheriff's Association submits testimony in opposition to HB2484.

The issue at hand concerns the blanket amendment allowing 50% good time credit for crimes committed after July 1, 2020. (Page 1, Lines 30-31.) As written, the amended language appears to apply to any crime, no matter the severity level or prisoner's grid placement. Currently, KSA 21-6821 allows for 15% good time credit unless the crime fits certain lower nondrug severity levels classifications or fits certain drug severity level crimes. These exceptions are awarded a 20% good time credit.

This bill would cause inmates to earn 50% good time credit regardless of the crime committed. This non-graduated good time credit award does not take into account the difference between severity levels nor does it account for the difference between nondrug offenses and drug offenses. Both are important considerations regarding good time credit amount. If a change to good time credit is imminent, it would be more appropriate to consider a change to the graduated levels of good time credit. Implementing an across the board jump from 15% or 20% credit to 50% credit fails to account for the basis of the original sentence.

While criminal justice reform and considering the Kansas jail and prison populations is important, this bill looks more like an effort to clear incarceration populations rather than an effort to conscientiously consider the need for sentences or the reason behind certain sentence lengths. The Kansas Sentencing Guidelines provide an approach to sentencing based on certain factors, including criminal history and severity level. A blanket 50% good time credit undermines the basis of the grid boxes and low, middle, and high number sentences. These sentences were determined following an assessment and judicial determination.

Finally, the amended language to jump to 50% good time credit fails to account for victims. Victims of crimes need to be considered and remembered when amending sentencing guidelines and good time credits. Victims often take solace in the fact that offenders will face consequences for the crimes committed and the innocent lives the offender disrupts. The drastic change considered in HB2484 falls short of providing victims peace of mind and a sense of justice.

The Kansas Sheriff's Association is opposed to HB2484 in its entirety.

Thank you for allowing this opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Sheriff Jeffrey T. Easter
Legislative Chair for the Kansas Sheriff's Association